

LITERARY EXAMINER.

BY MR. FRANCIS KIMBLE BUTLER.

What shall I do with all the days and hours?

That must be counted ere I see thy foot
How shall I charm the interval that lowers
Between this time and that sweet time of
Grace?

Shall I in slumber sleep each weary sense,
Wary with longing, shall I lose the day,
Or shall I, with some fond pretence,
Cheat myself to forget the present day?

Shall I for these lay on my soul the sin
Of casting from me God's great gift of time;
Shall I, these mists of memory locked within,
Leave, and forget, life's purposes sublime?

Oh! how, or by what means, may I contrive
To bring the hour that brings thee back more
near?

How may I teach my drooping hope to live
Until that blessed time, and thou, art here?

I'll tell thee: for thy sake, I will lay hold
Of all good aims, and consecrate to thee,
In worthy deeds, each moment that is told
While thou, beloved one, art far from me.

For thee, I will arouse my thoughts to try
All heavenly flights, all high and holy
strains;
For thy dear sake, I will walk patiently
Through these long hours, nor call their minutes
pains.

I will this dreary blank of absence make
A noble task-time, and will therein strive
To follow excellence, and to exert
More good than I have won since yet I live.

So may this doomed time build up in me
A thousand graces, which shall then be mine;
So may my love and longing hallowed be,
And thy dear thought an influence divine.

St. Augustine and Cuvier, or the Fifth and
Nineteenth Centuries.

Cuvier.—Augustine, pray declare your
opinion of our age; let the unprejudiced
light of the fifth century fall upon the nineteenth,
that we may see ourselves, and also you.

St. Augustine.—I will only indicate
what I feel and think, most noble Cuvier,
and your candor will excuse. But it seems
to me an error of your period, that it is too
much disposed to consider what it has dis-

covered of truth, in any case, as the whole
that belongs to it, and from the admiration
of a few circumstances detected by experi-

ments and instruments, is prone to fancy
that it has led the truth captive, and that the
very work indeed of Omnipotence is sub-

jected to its gaze;—and in short, Cuvier,
you appear to me, (I speak of the multitude
of philosophers,) to be falling into the same
error, in regard to physical science, which
was so fatal to us in the fifth century,
in regard to Divine knowledge.

The real Word of God was lost sight of, in fasten-

ing our attention exclusively on those points
of its doctrines which we endeavor
to bring within the compass of our defini-

tions and categories. And many of the
simple, at last, had a juster impression of
the whole than the learned, who, in the
examination of minute parts, lost sight of
the general bearing, and the divine inspira-

tion. Your errors, I say, in your own pro-

vince, are not very unlike to those; you are
constantly mistaking the circumstances of
natural operations for the things themselves,
and the grandeur of nature is felt less and
less for it, and your own importance the more.

So that, let me tell you, the arrogance of
the age is become excessive, (I hope many
are exempt), and you have not only lost
sight of the living cause of physical phe-

nomena, but do not even see the more nat-
ural and obvious grandeur of the effects,
while from a species of self-admiration you
laud your own times, and depreciate ours,
that one might be inclined to believe, that
wisdom was not born until the eighteenth
century at least, and did not learn to speak
until the nineteenth—when you have in-

vented for her a new language of chemical
and other learned terms, which at the same
time serve very well to emblazon your
discoveries—to rivet your attention on these
and on yourselves.

C.—But you must allow that this lan-
guage has become necessary?

St. A.—I am very far from being dis-

posed to undervalue the language or the
facts, which it serves to express; but you
know what an influence words exercise on
the minds of the multitude; and while the
new vocabulary of science recalls those
parts of physical actions which are ex-

plained, it leaves the others, much the most
numerous and generally the most admirable,
altogether out of sight, so that a more bro-

ken and imperfect view of the beauty and
greatness of those natural occurrences is, at
last, often taken, than if the mind were
left to its own general and unbiased im-

pressions of them.

C.—I must confess there is reason in
what you say, and I acknowledge that this
evil is incident to the popular views of
modern discoveries.

St. A.—And it will receive the best il-

lustration from your own science of anat-
omy and physiology. We preachers of the
fifth century, whose fond of natural knowl-

edge was exceedingly scanty, indulged at
least a feeling of reverence and awe, when
we contemplated the works of nature, and
we called them the works of God. And
when we spoke of man, it was as the im-

age of God, for we had not yet learned from
anatomy this material science, to think of
man as an image of the angels.

C.—Then you viewed him generally, not
particularly?

St. A.—True, we did so.

C.—But what think you then of the
comparison now more common, I mean
that to which you refer, that man wears
the image of animated nature, and is at the
head of the scale, the supreme animal, who,
"with front serene, governs the rest?"

St. A.—It introduces naturalism into
the ideas of the crowd, the unintelligent
crowd of servile philosophers, who have
never seen what you see, Cuvier, and never
will, until they acknowledge the same su-

pernatural light.

C.—I am loth to believe it.

St. A.—But it is true—take notice only
in what manner they view the most exalted
acts of life—they really see nothing in
them but the modern discoveries of their
analysis. What a mystery to us was breath-

ing—the constant remembrance of that
day of Creation, when "God formed man
of the dust of the ground, and breathed
into his nostrils the breath of life," and
when we reflected on the respiration of a
human being we saw, as it were, that di-

vine transaction before us; it was a divin-

C.—But you do not consider it forbid-

den to explore into the mysteries of nature,
and to detect the laws of physical action?

St. A.—No, Cuvier, nor; and it is possi-

ble it may be done modestly, and by those
who do not see nature less vividly and
naturally as a whole, on account of the
few notices they have taken of the fixed
order of events. These are performing a
service, the importance of which has yet to
be appreciated. That it may be so, yet the
spirit of the past, must re-descend on the
spirit of the present, and the infant must
mix with man.

C.—I understand you to say, that the
infant simplicity of primitive times must
be combined with the stern philosophy of
the present age.

St. A.—Even so.

C.—But what points of probable harmo-

ny do you perceive?

St. A.—I perceive many. And neither do
I despair that an amicable intercourse
may be established between them, since
what should hinder that ages as well as
countries should engage in an exchange of
their advantages, that the superfluities of
the one may supply the deficiencies of the
other. I will not be so wedded to preju-

dice as to say that the fifth has no need of
the nineteenth century. I do not claim for
my age a superiority of knowledge, but a
greater elevation of mind—no, not that,
but I should say a more rational end, for
it was to find God in every thing, and to
delimitate his attributes; and this, I am sure,
is a worthier pursuit, than to count nature
ambitiously, and to settle her laws—but at
the same time I must confess that our ig-

norance of nature often beguiled us into su-

perstition, and our partial acquaintance
with her laws limited our resources of il-

lustration.

C.—I am rejoiced to hear, St. Augustine,
that you are ready to concede to us this
merit, that we have at least checked the
progress of superstition, and provided a
fund of agreeable information.

St. A.—And it is here indeed where
you reap a just distinction—and it will be
no mean praise, I think, that you have
opened these rich resources of discovery.

You have furnished theology with a new
language, and that the most expressive kind,
because congenial: for the expression of
natural facts and their laws affords the
most appropriate symbols, and, if I may
so say, converse—for the exposition of the-
ological truth. And this truly is a most val-

uable acquisition, especially now, that the
language of theology has become technical
and obsolete, and lost its power over the
human understanding.

C.—Then we philosophers of modern
times, according to this account, have been
employing ourselves, all this while, in con-

structing a new language for the use of
you, theologians, and of settling its gram-

mar and syntax?

St. A.—Assuredly, Cuvier, for in this
light precisely do I now view your valua-

ble labors; and surely you cannot consider
the services which you have been thus ren-

dering to the best interests of mankind, as
insignificant or deserving of regret?

C.—By no means—and I can only ex-

press my sense of gratification, in having at
last drawn from you a confession, that nei-

ther has the nineteenth century been want-

ing in useful contributions to the general
benefit of the human race.

St. A.—No, Cuvier, I never could hold
from your times that honor—I would only
gladly lessen or curb that over-weening
conceit which seems to have seized the men
of your generation, that no real wisdom
was ever sought after, for less obtained,
until the dawn of your modern epoch: here
lies your error, here your danger, for the
objects we had in view, and especially the
Christians, who lived in the centuries be-

fore us—however imperfectly reached—were
all of the noblest and best kind—no other
than to obtain a direct and certain knowl-

edge of that Being, whose spirit directs na-

ture, and has impressed upon her the most
benevolent and unerring laws.

C.—But you failed in the attempt.

St. A.—We did often, but mostly in the
expression of our views, for our sentiments
were more just than our language.

C.—And you expect now to be more
successful—with the benefit of this new
language?

St. A.—Yes, for the works of God be-

ing conat with his Word, when the laws
of the former are perfectly ascertained, they
will be a just expression of the truths of
the latter.

C.—Then, O glorious philosophy of the
nineteenth century, if such indeed, are the
distinctions which await it!

St. A.—It will be invested with a light
not its own, the *purpureum lumen Juvena-*

te.

C.—It will be beautiful as the earth
itself, under the first beams of the morning.

St. A.—And the sight you must allow,
is a glorious one, when mountains, lawns,
and streams first burst upon the view, un-

der the light of the rising sun.

C.—And such, you conceive, will be
the result, when the light of the theology
of the earlier ages is poured upon the var-

ied ad extended science of modern times?

St. A.—Such are my anticipations.

C.—May they be fulfilled, but the signs
of the times—

St. A.—On the whole, I consider them
auspicious—a gentle spirit of peace—an
unwearied appliance of investigation—the
wars of theology sinking fast into obli-

ivion and contempt, unless among the sil-

lies of mankind, who are faint still to fight
their battles over again—but the wisest and
the true-hearted have engaged in a better
contest—to subdue the frowardness of their
own spirits—to find the pledge and earnest
of truth, intertwined with the olive of peace,
rather than the laurels of victory.

C.—I accept the omen—but what of
philosophy?

St. A.—Philosophy will advance.

C.—I am to understand then, that you
are of those, who look for progress, and ex-

pect not the human race to be stationary?

St. A.—No more than the individual.

The earlier ages of christianity were the
infancy of the modern races; and the best
and most natural impressions were then
made—to be deepened by philosophy and
reason. But theology takes precedence of
philosophy, and but corroborates her truths,
as age but explains the impressions of child-

hood.

C.—I most cheerfully concede this point
now, my most youthful Augustine, and the
more so, for that my best hopes are excited
by your interview. And surely this inter-

course of distant ages has shed a new halo
of light and glory around the history of
man—since such are the renovations, which
probably await all the sciences, and pur-

suits, and aspirations, of the humanity.

St. A.—And indeed, my beloved Cuvier,
such may most certainly be expected.

C.—I hail their rise.—*Kimble's Lec-*

tures.

Examinations are formidable, even to the
best prepared, for the greatest fool may ask
more than the wisest man can answer.

Characters Reconsidered.

Added as men are to the sheepish
principle of following where they are led,
and apt as the multitude may be to credit
what they are told to believe, inquiring and
independent spirits make their appearance
from time to time to question history, and
call for a reconsideration of the characters
of its heroes. The general tendency of
these inquiries has been to rescue from ob-

livity great names that may have been de-

serving of it—to add to, and not to detract
from, the majestic images in the yet unfill-

ed gallery of the world's heroes. Many a
name once execrated has become respected;
many a false man, in the popular estima-

tion, has been elevated into a true man;
and many a quasi-demon into a quasi-saint.

We shall not attempt to go through the
long and illustrious list of such names—a
list which, to say nothing of the saints and
apostles of Christianity, would include
Socrates, Aristotle, Bacon, Harvey, Galileo,
Cornelius Agrippa, and a whole host of
glorious men, to whose memory the world
has done justice for the scorn, hatred, and
persecution of their contemporaries. It
may not be uninteresting, however, to group
together a few minor instances of this kind
of reaction in the moral world, of which
the effect is not yet complete. We select
a few cases still pending in the great court
of human appeal, in which the appellants
have been heard by their counsel, and in
which the great judge, Opinion, has shown
by his random expressions, as well as by
the tones of his voice, that he is about to
reverse the judgment of the 'court below.'

Two remarkable instances of this kind
of reaction, have taken place with regard
to characters in Shakespeare. In his im-

mortal pages, Macbeth stands branded as
a weak and cowardly murderer, a man who,
goaded by a strong-minded and bad woman,
and by the promptings of his own guilty
ambition, treacherously slew his sleeping
guest—that great king to whom he had
sworn allegiance, and to whom he owed the
double fealty of a subject and a host. Yet
recent researches have shown that Shaks-

peare pilloried a comparatively innocent
man, by founding that noble play upon
tradition, and not upon history. Macbeth
slew Duncan, it is true; but not in his bed;
not asleep and unarmed; but in open fight
and on the field of battle. It does not even
appear that Macbeth was a usurper; but
granting that he were, still, in the unsettled
and semi-barbarous period in which he
lived, usurpation was a common occurrence;
and in his case, the usurpation, if usurpation
it were, proved of advantage to the
country that acquired in it. Shakspeare's
narrative was derived from Holinshed, who
derived it from Boyce, who again derived it
from tradition. Barrow is a personage
totally unknown either to history or tradi-

tion. Macbeth reigned over Scotland for
fifteen years; and if there were a legal flaw
in his title to the throne, endeavored to
make a good moral title by the general vig-

or and policy of his administration, and by
his justice to the people. Sir Walter
Scott says of him, "that he broke no law
of hospitality in his attempt on Duncan's
life. He attacked and slew him at a place
called Bothgowan, or the Smith's House,
near Elgin; and not, as has been supposed,
in his own castle of Inverness. The act
was bloody, as was the complexion of the
times; but in very truth, the claim of Mac-

beth to the throne, according to the rule of
Scottish succession, was better than that of
Duncan. As a king, the tyrant so much
exclaimed against was in reality, a firm,
just, and equitable prince." The reaction
has thus begun: men have learned to sepa-

rate the Macbeth of Shakspeare from the
Macbeth of history—to admire the first-
mentioned as one of the grandest portrai-

tures of crime and sorrow in the whole
range of literature; more interesting, al-

though fictitious, than the real Macbeth
that lived and moved; but to do justice at
all convenient times to the fame that had
the misfortune (for itself, not for the
genius), and to be made available for its
purposes.

Richard III. of England is another royal
personage whose memory has been similar-

ly unfortunate in coming into contact with
the purposes of Shakspeare. No doubt the
world has gained; but the world, while do-

ing justice to the real Richard, will for-

getful lose no portion of the delight and
instruction derivable from the eventful sto-

ry of the imaginary one. The materials
available for the dramatist's purpose were
found in Holinshed, who took them from
the prejudiced pen of Sir Thomas More.

Later historians denied the accuracy of Sir
Thomas More's statements, and the truth
of his portraiture; and while they could not
gainsay the fact that Richard had commit-

ted crimes in the pursuit of power, explain-

ed, if they did not apologise for them, by
the character of his age, which was not
one tender of human life, nor scrupulous
as to its means for the attainment of its
objects. The Richard of Shakspeare is a
gigantic criminal; the Richard of impartial
history is still a criminal, but a man not all
evil—a man that turned to a good use the
power that he may have ill acquired; a
man that made enemies of his haughty, vin-

dictive, and bloodthirsty nobles; but that
ruled the people with wisdom and modera-

tion, and treated them in a manner to de-

serve, if it did not obtain their love. His
memory has cried aloud for justice. Mr.
Sharon Turner has done battle in its be-

half; has entered the court of appeal, and
made out such a case in his favor as goes far
to qualify, if it cannot reverse, the previous
judgment.

While we are upon the subject of kings,
we cannot omit the case of James I.—the
alleged bigot and pedant; the mock Solom-

on, and the butt of ridicule for a long pe-

riod for every one who desired to have a
fling at royalty. Every one who has read
the elder D'Israeli's inquiry into the litera-

ry and political character of that monarch,
will confess that he has found not only a
zealous, but an able defender. Mr. D'Is-

raeli, as he informs us in his preface to this
interesting historical sketch, set off in the
world with the popular notions of the char-

acter of James I.; but in the course of
study, and with a more enlarged comprehen-

sion of the age, he was struck with the con-

trast of his real with his apparent charac-

ter, and developed those hidden and invol-

ed causes which so long influenced histori-

ans and memoir writers in vilifying and ri-

diculing this monarch. Mr. D'Israeli's
treatise is a masterpiece of its kind. It
seeks to prove that the alleged bigot was
tested pedantry; that the so-called bigot was
less bigoted than his age; that the epithet
"Solomon," applied to him in mockery,
ought to have been applied to him in seri-

ousness and in respect; that the monarch,
accused of personal cowardice, dreaded
for his people, and not for himself; and
that his contemporaries saw and acknowl-

edged in him those virtues and talents which
a succeeding age, led astray by prejudiced
writers, altogether denied. Who shall say
that Mr. D'Israeli has failed in this chival-

rous attempt? Not we, on the contrary,

we must admit that he has done much to

rescue the memory of his hero from obli-

quy that appears unfortified; and that, al-

though this philosopher on the throne, and
father of his people, lived without exciting
gratitude, and died without inspiring regret;
unregarded, unremembered, there is jus-

tice to be gathered from the rolling of the
centuries; that the violence of the blow
aimed at his memory has recoiled upon
those who struck it; and that the thinkers
of the present age, if they do not share in
all the enthusiasm of his defender, at least
suspend their judgment, and admit that his
detractors may have been in error.

The history of the illustrious Machiavel-

li is another instance of pertinacious wrong
disappearing before the lights exhibited by
cool and dispassionate inquiry. For three
centuries and upwards, his name has served
to designate a particular kind of political
duplicity and cunning. To accuse a states-

man of Machiavellism, has been to ex-

hibit him at the expense of his honesty
and virtue—to exonerate him from the im-

putation of lack of brains, only to brand
him as possessing too much for the welfare
of his species. "Il Principe" ("The Prince"),
his famous treatise, long considered in-
famous, brought all this obloquy upon him.

In that much-spoken-of, but little known
work, he drew up the code of despotism,
concealing his satire so well, that the world
mistook the hater for a friend of tyranny,
and the denouncer of crimes against the
people for their apologist. Machiavelli suf-

fered in the cause of freedom; he was put
to the torture by a despot, and endured sor-

rows of many kinds for his devotion to his
country. Disgusted with princes and with
the people too, he wrote his celebrated
work, intending a satire upon the crimes of
rulers. The obstinate world insisted upon
receiving the satire in a spirit the very re-

verse of that which animated its author,
with about as little justice as we should ex-

hibit were we to accuse Henry Fielding of
preaching up robbery and murder for his
life of Jonathan Wild the Great. Machi-

avelli's object, it is true, was not quite so
good as that of the novelist. The people,
moreover, were not aware of the friend they
had in this illustrious diplomatist. They
considered the hard words he employed
against men in general as the outpourings
of a demoniac hatred. They could not see
that the severe satire was intended for their
benefit, or make any allowance for the bit-

terness of feeling with which unmerited
suffering had imbued one of the ablest men
of his time. Machiavelli dedicated his
treatise of "The Prince" to Lorenzo, Duke
of Urbino, "the usurper of the liberties of
Florence; a man whom he hated, against
whose government he had conspired, and
who had caused him to be put upon the
rack to extort from his agony the names of
his confederates. This circumstance might
have served to open the eyes of the herd
of men and of writers to the real purpose
of the author; but it did not. Treatise af-

ter treatise was written to refute doctrines
which Machiavelli detested; and his name be-

came the synonyme for the political criminality
and astuteness which it was his real object
to hold up to the abhorrence of mankind.

Amongst others who employed their pens
in this cause was Frederick the Great of
Prussia, who wrote in his youth a tract en-

itled "Anti-Machiavel." "This military ge-

nius," says D'Israeli, "protested against those